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# Our Brothers, Our Sisters, Our Sons" : A Preliminary Examination of Resistance Inside South Africa

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CONFIDENTIAL

'OUR BROTHERS,

OUR SISTERS,

OUR SONS' \*

A PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF  
RESISTANCE INSIDE SOUTH AFRICA

Prepared for the  
PCR Commission Meeting

by

Robert Hislaire and  
Prexy Nesbitt  
July 1981

\* Title taken from a clandestine leaflet circulated  
inside South Africa in the early 1970s.



## PREFACE

The five years since June 1976 have seen a rising level of popular struggle combined with an expanding campaign of armed action.

The most visible and frequent form of resistance during the recent period has been action over specific grievances which are a direct effect of the apartheid system on people's lives.... There have been widespread and sustained struggles on several fronts, often at an unprecedented level; struggles against the denial of trade union rights and low pay for black workers; against high and increasing rents and other housing costs; against crippling increases in the transport fares which black people have to pay to travel to the shops, factories and offices in "white areas" from the ghetto "townships" and "locations" in which they are forced to live; against inferior, racially segregated education; against forced removals and relocation of whole communities in both urban and rural areas.

Few conclusions perhaps can be drawn about relations between underground political activity and the open political activity. All evidence indicates that the situation goes far beyond opposition only to specific or isolated effects of apartheid. There is a clear demand for liberation and total eradication of the system, with widespread support for the armed struggle.

(Developments in South Africa  
Since the Uprising of 1976,  
General Assembly, A/Conf. 107/3,  
20 April 1981, p.4)

What seems to be happening in South Africa today is a process. It is one wherein slowly but steadily significant sectors of the South African people are becoming "the mountains" of the resistance inside the country. Today, three basic sources can be identified as jointly constituting the threat to the apartheid system: namely, 1) internal resistance by the oppressed; 2) the shifting balance of forces in South Africa; and 3) the growing strength of the international movement to isolate South Africa. Of the three clearly the most critical is the internal resistance struggle. This has been



long recognized. What is new is the accelerating rate at which the population is becoming more and more engaged. The late Amilcar Cabral perhaps best described it when he was chidingly told by a journalist at a London press conference in 1971 that the PAIGC could never win for Guinea Bissau did not have the proper terrain for guerilla struggle. Cabral answered patiently with the clear, calm style he had, "our people are our mountains."

Three movements have thus far been at the vortex of black resistance to the apartheid régime of South Africa: The African National Congress (ANC) and its associate organization, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), the oldest liberation movement formed in 1912; the Pan African Congress of Azania (PAC), formed by Africanists having split from the ANC in 1959 over ideological questions; and finally various groups such as the South African Students' Organization (SASO) which had been led by Steve Biko and later banned, and today, AZAPO, the Azanian People's Organization, ASASCO, the Azanian Students' Organization and COSAS, the Congress of South African Students, all generally grouped under the generic banner of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM).

The purposes of this paper are the following:

- (1) to examine each of the three major movements cited above in the light of concrete action taken against the racist régime of South Africa;
- (2) to attempt to delineate the amount of support each organization enjoys amongst the oppressed in South Africa;
- (3) to identify who endorses these organizations, whether internal<sup>1)</sup> or external participants and supporters;
- (4) and finally to ascertain the amount of media coverage each organization has been given in recent years.

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1) e.g., Bishop Tutu, General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, in spite of the constraint of the illegality of associating with, even quoting "banned organizations", has consistently worked with such ANC-related projects as the "Freedom Charter" and "Free Mandela" campaigns.



What is not attempted in the following pages is a systematic effort to examine the mechanism of oppression and repression in South Africa. Unfortunately, space and time do not permit such a discussion. Thus, the reader should bear in mind that serious description and commentary on the dialectic between repression and resistance - a critical component to fully perceiving the nature of resistance in South Africa - is absent herein.

Before any discussion of the three organizations' activities is undertaken, it might be beneficial to present a brief history of each of these movements.

#### African National Congress

The African National Congress came into being on January 8 1912, emerging from a coalition of intellectuals, peasants and workers.<sup>2)</sup> Amongst its first demands were: one man one vote, land for the peasantry and freedom and unity for all of Africa. A year later, with the passing of the Land Act, the ANC sent a delegation to London asking for its suppression (the British government had the right to veto), a demand that was not met favorably. The 1920s and 1930s saw the increasing in numbers of the black working class due to growth in the South African economy, especially in the mining sector. Consequently, there were more and more attempts to establish black trade unions. This period saw as well the first major strikes led by a growing black labour movement. The struggle against the decision to withdraw suffrage rights from Cape Coloureds and Africans was led by the ANC in the same period, and resulted in a compromise in which Africans were offered consultative representation. In the 1940s and 1950s, the ANC increasingly showed its willingness to unite with all groups dedicated to the struggle against white supremacy.

"The ANC's resistance to racially-based nationalism was still further reinforced once it began to seek organizational alliances across the colour line in the 1950s,

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2) "Colonialisme, Apartheid et luttes de libération". Afrique du Sud-Namibie. Dernier trimestre 1977. pp. 26-27; Benson, Mary, The African Patriots, Faber and Faber, London, 1963.



first with the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and later with coloureds and anti-government whites. These alliances, made initially with the object of boosting the ANC's organizational capacity, eventually also had a profound effect on the shaping of African ideology, for once the ANC had embraced the strategy of a multi-racial united front, the adoption of any more racially exclusive creed became impossible."<sup>3)</sup>

These new alliances were exemplified by the agreement between the ANC and the SAIC in July 1951 to form a Joint Planning Council for national campaign of civil disobedience, and in 1953-54, the establishment by the ANC of working relationships with the South African Coloured People's Organization and the South African Congress of Democrats, the latter a white, mostly English-speaking organization.

On June 26 1956, a year after the Congress of the People had been held, the Freedom Charter was adopted by the ANC. The Charter outlined the major political orientations the ANC's struggle was to take against the white South African régime, and it also stressed the ANC's commitment to a non-racial ideology in which the fruits of South Africa were to be shared and enjoyed by all. Shortly after adoption of the Charter, 156 members of the ANC were arrested under the accusation of high treason. The banning of the ANC (along with the PAC) was to follow, after the Sharpeville massacre of March 21 1960, under the Unlawful Organizations Act of April 8 1960. Following the bannings, the importance of armed struggle as a mode of political resistance began to emerge, as the previous policy of non-violence had failed to achieve any positive result for the oppressed, and in fact, the liberation movements' voices had been legally stifled.

#### Pan Africanist Congress of Azania

The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania emerged as an independent organization in 1959, after a long debate within the ANC concerning the means and ideology that should be utilized in order to achieve the liberation of the racially

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3) Gail M. Gerhart. "Black Power in South Africa. The Evolution of an Ideology". University of California Press, 1978, p.101.



oppressed. The Africanist fraction of the ANC, (before the split) which became increasingly strong in the ANC Youth League, rejected the idea that all anti-racist forces should be regrouped under one non-racial organization. The Africanists argued that it was necessary to bring together all Africans, since it was they, by birthright who possessed the land of South Africa, further they argued that the former colonialisers and other ethnic minorities such as the Coloureds and Indians should be permitted to remain only on acceptance of the majority's terms. As the 1959 Africanist Inaugural Convention declared in its founding documents:

"We aim politically, at government of the Africans by the Africans for the Africans, with everybody who owes his only loyalty to Africa, who is prepared to accept the democratic rule of an African majority, being regarded as an African. We guarantee no minority rights, because we think in terms of individuals and not of groups."<sup>4)</sup>

Thus, it was necessary according to the PAC, to unify all Black Africans and only Black Africans under one political force and only then, from a position of strength, could discussion under the PAC's terms take place. White opponents to the South African régime were to be viewed with deep mistrust, as they, despite their fundamental disagreement with white supremacist policies, still continued to reap the benefits that white South Africa offered them. Consequently, the ANC's non-racial ideology was to be vehemently rejected. The formative viewpoint of PAC on white liberals was clearly stated in the same 1959 documents alluded to above. Speaking of the whites in the ANC they stated:

"These 'leaders' consider South Africa and its wealth to belong to all who live in it, the alien dispossessioners and the indigenous victims. They regard as equals the foreign master and his indigenous slave, the white exploiter and the African exploited, the foreign oppressor and the indigenous oppressed. They regard as brothers the subject Africans and their European overlords. They are too incredibly naïve and too fantastically unrealistic to see that the interests of the subject peoples who are criminally oppressed, ruthlessly exploited and unhumanly degraded, are in sharp

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4) "PAC in Perspective", published by the Mission to Europe and the Americas, PAC of Azania, London, England, 1973, pp.12-13.



conflict and in pointed contradiction with those of the white ruling class."

"The PAC recognizes the existence in South Africa of minority national groups of European and Indian origin. Contrary to all other parties, we recognize the so-called Coloureds as Africans. The tragedy of the South African political situation is that many allegedly progressive white intellectuals fail to outgrow the racist environment into which they are born and bred. As a result, they seek to infiltrate the liberation movement in order to shape its policy and programme in the image of their own intellectual wavering. They seek to import into the movement the racist antagonism of the white man against the Africans. This antagonism becomes particularly acute when the Africans refuse to serve the private political interests of the 'progressive' white man." 5)

In March 1960, eleven months after its formation, the PAC, under its Positive Action Campaign, called for mass civil disobedience throughout South Africa. Government reaction followed quickly in the shape of the Sharpeville and Langa massacres on March 21 1960, and the subsequent banning of both South African liberation movements.

Throughout this period, the PAC continued to enjoy large support amongst the black masses as it had answered to the desire for action expressed by many Africans. Further, PAC had demonstrated that the apartheid régime would in fact use all means possible to crush any form of black opposition, be it violent or non-violent. An increasing number of Africans identified with the PAC, as it stressed bold political action and the need for blacks to create a new identity for themselves without the interference of outside forces.

#### The Black Consciousness Movement

The Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), relatively new when compared to the ANC and the PAC,

"grew up through an increased realisation amongst black intellectuals of their own systematic exploitation and in reaction to white paternalism, but it was fuelled by resistance to the government-sponsored ideology of ethnicity that was used to justify the Bantustan programme."6)

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5) Ibid. p.15 and 16.

6) "South Africa in the 1980s", published by CIIR, p.25.



Despite the international prominence given to the BCM during 1976 and the uprisings now called Soweto, the actual beginnings of the BCM can be traced to dates as early as July 1968 when at the then mixed Congress of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) Steve Biko and fellow black medical students drew aside to discuss their second class citizenship within the NUSAS. Another source of the BCM is the struggle around the national question and the founding of the PAC. A third source of the BCM from 1966 onwards was the "Black Theology" movement in the USA.

From the beginning BCM was not one organization or one political movement. All indications are that the BCM never functioned as a formal federation or coalition. The "statement of principles" for the BCM was not written. It was a generalized mood of assertion, pride and anger that was its constitution. The BCM was a torrent of various organizations with two main constituent groups constituting the BCM, namely, the South African Students Organization (SASO) and the Black People's Convention (BPC) with its related Black Communities Programme (BCP). Something of the breadth and depth of the BCM can be gleaned from the following partial listing of organizations and groups.

A PARTIAL LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE BCM

- South African Students Organization (SASO)
- National Youth Organization (NYO)
- South African Students Movement (SASM)
- Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC)
- African Teachers Association of SA (ATASA)
- South African Black Scholars Association (SABSA)
- Association for Educational and Cultural Advancement of Africans (ASSECA)
- Transvaal Labour Youth Organization
- Black People's Convention (BPC)
- Black Parents Federation (BPF)
- Black Parents Association (BPA)
- Soweto Parents Association (SPA)
- Black Allied Workers Union (BAWU)
- Union of Black Journalists (UBJ)
- People's Experimental Theatre (PET)
- Housewives League
- Soweto African Traders Association



Shebeen Owners Association  
Witwatersrand Taxi Association  
The Inter-Denominational African Ministers Association  
of SA (IDAMASA)  
The African Independent Church's Association (AICA)  
The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)

Unlike the ANC, whites were not permitted to join the different groups making up the BCM, but also differentiating themselves from the PAC policy of POQO (we alone), the BCM brought together as 'Black', all minorities such as Coloureds and Indians who also suffered from racial oppression.

Throughout, BCM spokespersons differentiated themselves from both ANC and PAC. As one spokesman said recently:

"As to whether we will operate like the ANC or the PAC, the only difference in terms of our involvement is that the ANC and the PAC have opted for armed struggle as the solution to the problems of our country. We have always seen ourselves as an internal resistance movement, not only changing people psychologically, but also making them aware that they can do something physically." 7)

Nonetheless, it can be said that the BCM has drawn its strength from two major factors. Firstly, the banning of the two major liberation movements in 1960 meant that there was no longer any legal organization that could represent Black demands within South Africa. There was a great need for an organization to fill in this vacuum. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the Soweto uprisings of 1976 and the government's reaction provided a large mass of youth and students open to BCM ideas, and thirsty for political action concerning existing realities and conditions within the townships. Various BCM organizations of black youth were logical and available vehicles for these new waves of angry black youth.

"Now after June 16 (1976 Soweto) the degree of political awareness has developed to such an extent that even eight-year olds understand what you mean by politics...

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7) "What is the Black Consciousness Movement of South Africa?", South African News Agency (SANA) BULLETIN, No.11, August 1979, p.3.



Adults who were afraid to participate in politics in Soweto because of the number of people who have been killed have now realized that it does not really matter whether you fight or not, the régime still kills you. They accept that it is better to die fighting than just to be killed in your own house." 8)

#### ANC

During the period that led up to the formation of the PAC, the ANC can be said to have lost the initiative in the struggle for liberation. The ANC was in disarray following the arrest of many of its leaders, was unable to respond adequately to the changes that were taking place within white supremacist power structures, and was unable to answer effectively to the orthodox nationalism that was becoming prevalent amongst the majority of the African population. The ANC had not yet been able to analyse these changes and to propose a convincing alternative to the strong arguments for 'going it alone'. This is exemplified by the fact that it was the PAC that was largely responsible for most concrete action that was to take place during the period of its short legal existence. The PAC was merely, it claimed, putting into effect the 1949 ANC Youth League Programme of Action which called for new methods of struggle such as strikes, civil disobedience, boycotts, non-cooperation and open defiance of unjust laws.

The confusion that the ANC found itself in is demonstrated by Nelson Mandela's words, spoken during the Rivonia trial in 1962, where he was accused, along with other ANC members, of sabotage and conspiracy to overthrow the government by revolution:

"We of the ANC have always stood for a non-racial democracy, and we shrank from any action which might drive the races further apart than they already are. But the hard facts were that the 50 years of non-violence had brought nothing but more and more repressive legislation and fewer and fewer rights... It is a fact that for a long time the people had been talking of violence - of the day when they would fight

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8) Speech given by Mr Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu BCM of South Africa to the Assembly of the IUEF held in Geneva, November 22 1976, page 4.



the white man and win back their country - and we, the leaders of the ANC, had nevertheless always prevailed upon them to avoid violence and to pursue peaceful methods. When some of us discussed this in May and June 1961, it could not be denied that our policy to achieve a non-racial state by non-violence had achieved nothing, and that our followers were beginning to lose confidence in this policy and were developing disturbing ideas of terrorism." 9)

The purpose of this section on the ANC is to attempt to determine, through the examination of press clippings, whether the ANC after its relative loss of influence in the late 1950s and 1960s, has been able to emerge as an effective liberation movement, whether it has gained large internal and external support and finally, whether its political and military action has been effective in view of its objectives. In an interview given to 'Southern Africa' magazine, the ANC Secretary-General Alfred Nzo stated that the aims of the ANC today were as follows:

"The aim, eventually, is to draw an armed people into the struggle. An armed people, developing around the core that has been set up - the people's army, Umkonto We Siwze - that is our aim. But in order to get our people to reach that situation you must get a people that is politically conscious now, to accept the inevitability of this form of struggle and that is what is happening in South Africa today. It is impossible to avoid the political mobilisation of the people, which in our view must form the firm and reliable base for the escalation of the military." 10)

Has the ANC been able to work effectively towards these aims? The authors of the recent Catholic Institute for International Relations' booklet, 'South Africa in the 1980s', argue that the ANC has successfully begun to carry out this plan and, since the June 1976 Soweto uprisings, more and more Africans have been open to the ideas, methods and objectives of the ANC.

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- 9) "Nelson Mandela Speaks" South African Studies 4, pp. 89-90, published by Publicity and Information Bureau ANC-SA, London.  
10) "A Voice for Liberation - ANC Leader Interviewed", Southern Africa, January/February 1981.



"... The ANC gained important new recruits in the wake of the 1976 police riots. No other movement is as geared to benefit from the labour militancy and student protest that now dominate black politics. Similarly, in its central policy statement, the Freedom Charter, the ANC put forward a programme for the whole nation appealing to a wide spectrum of opinion in its emphasis on democracy and egalitarianism." 11)

Not only do the authors claim that the ANC has been gaining support due to the increasing militancy that emerged among Black youth in 1976, but they argue further that the ANC's socialist analysis of society has also brought increased support amongst Black workers in important industrial areas. They argue that attempts to organize outside the usual trade union channels is providing more and more potential recruits for the ANC, and that activity carried out with success by the ANC has been a source of great joy in the industrial townships.

The CIIR authors conclude that

"(the ANC) finds itself today a strictly disciplined underground movement with a wide penumbra of sympathisers making preparations for guerilla war, a position assumed by them in the face of the intransigence of the South African government, after pursuing a policy of non-violent change for half a century." 12)

Do press clippings justify the CIIR's conclusions or do they in fact demonstrate that this analysis has been too hasty? Press cuttings 13) seem to show a resurgence of ANC activity, both militarily and politically. Newspapers worldwide have been giving increasing coverage to ANC activities carried out within South Africa, and of its diplomatic efforts abroad. Also, and perhaps most significantly, an examination of the world press seems to provide grounds for thinking that the apartheid government sees the African National Congress as the organization that is posing the most serious threat to

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11) Catholic Institute for International Relations, "South Africa in the 1980s", London, 1981, pp.33-34.

12) Ibid. pp. 35-36.

13) Press cuttings that have been used for the purpose of this report on the ANC, PAC and BCM, come from a period of approximately 4 years, i.e., from 1977 up to the present day.



the South African status quo. The South African Defence Forces have been stepping up attacks over recent years against alleged ANC members in neighbouring countries, or refugee camps in these same countries and on military bases in Angola. A few examples of SADF activity in this sphere are the attack on ANC members in Swaziland in February 1978<sup>14)</sup>, the kidnapping of ANC official, Ndugu Victor Matlou whilst on his way to Maseru, Lesotho<sup>15)</sup>, and the attack by South African commandos on ANC refugee camps in Matola, Mozambique in which twelve people were killed.<sup>16)</sup>

On top of its military offensive against ANC centres and members, the South African government has stepped up its vocal attacks on the ANC and has at times in trials attempted to make an example of ANC militants in the hope that sympathisers might be discouraged from further activity within the organization. The trial of three Blacks in November 1980 accused of taking part in a raid on a South African police station, and sentenced to be hung, was reported in the Guardian in the following manner:

"Observers here believe yesterday's death sentences reflect a general stiffening by the authorities of penalties for the growing insurgency in South Africa, much of which appears to have official or unofficial ANC sponsorship." 17)

The head of the South African security police has also stated on various occasions that the ANC is increasingly viewed as the "largest terrorist organization" operating within South Africa<sup>18)</sup> and that most guerilla activity taking place within the country was to be blamed on the ANC:

"Brigadier Coetzee commented in the South African Star (newspaper) 'that attempts by the banned Pan Africanist Congress at organized terrorism had little or no success. The ANC was another matter; it had far more sophisticated organizational structure and it was from its ranks that most of the terrorists active in South Africa in recent times had come.'" 19)

14) Maputo radio report February 1978.

15) Daily News (Tanzania) December 21, 1979.

16) The Guardian (UK) February 7, 1981.

17) The Guardian (UK) November 27, 1980.

18) Financial Mail December 19, 1980.

19) Southern Africa January 1979.



The South African paper, the Rand Daily Mail reported that on April 21, 1981, Security Police headquartered at Pretoria stated that

"insurgents - believed to be infiltrators - had become more advanced and organized. The police further asserted that at the disposal of the insurgents were:

- A) a sophisticated system of underground shelters;
- B) elaborate hidden caches where weapons were stored and made ready for use only on the day of attack;
- C) a dead letterbox system of communications in which underground hidden postboxes were used for messages, instructions, and money transfers.

Additionally, the police claimed that since 1979 all incursions into South Africa had been from Mozambique via Swaziland. 19i)

Quentin Peel, until recently the British Financial Times correspondent in South Africa, has also corroborated the CIIR stipulation of ANC paramountcy stating in June this year:

"Although the black community remains deeply divided, largely leaderless, and alienated, there is no doubt the multi-racial stance of the ANC is attracting increasing support... Most recent bannings and detentions have been of activists showing signs of moving from the Black Consciousness camp to the ANC." 19ii)

There is evidence as well to show that continuous attempts have been made by the apartheid government to discredit the ANC abroad, by continuously emphasizing the ANC relationship with the South African Communist Party. Louis Le Grange, presently Minister of Police, claimed on October 10, 1979, that the ANC was merely a cover for the SACP in its fight for a Marxist revolution in South Africa.<sup>20)</sup> All indications are that there will be an increased effort by South African Government forces to attack the ANC by publicizing its alleged "communist"/Moscow domination. External and objective analysts, however, dispute these arguments and in fact claim that the SACP has been losing some of its influence in the ANC, due to the new flow of recruits the ANC has been attracting. The CIIR commentary previously cited states:

19i) Rand Daily Mail (South Africa) April 21, 1981.

19ii) Financial Times (UK) June 15, 1981.

20) Focus on Political Repression in South Africa - News Bulletin of International Defense and Aid Fund.



"There is, indeed, no evidence to suggest that the SACP has any substantial presence in South Africa, while ANC cells and sympathisers, local sources suggest, have recently been growing appreciably. The structure of the ANC, emerging in the 1980s, would be that of a popular nationalist movement with a movement and leadership quite unlike the communist front organization of whites' fears." 21)

In fact, the data itself seems to indicate that, rather than being a SACP front, the ANC itself is behind many organizations inside South Africa. The CIIR analysis points this out asserting:

"It is safe to say that in all political or social groupings and associations, ANC members and sympathizers will be found pressing for a worker orientation and pushing debate into the context of national liberation. While a small minority (of the ANC) will be committed communists many more will seek a nationalism involving varying degrees of socialist transformation of society coupled with a strong element of state control." (page 36)

This particular CIIR perspective has been further reinforced by recent reports concerning a relative loss of influence of communist cadres within the ANC. Some commentators feel that this loss of influence is well demonstrated by the fact that Joe Slovo, a member of the SACP, and also for a long period head of the ANC military wing, is likely to see his military leadership role taken away, and given to a younger Black activist, Thabo Mbeki. 22)

"Many fresh ANC guerillas joined the movement not because they appreciated its views on dialectical materialism, but because the ANC is widely considered in South Africa to be the only exile group currently capable of waging a guerilla war against Pretoria." 23)

The second reason for the apartheid régime to continuously stress the ANC/SACP relationship, is the hope that it would discourage potential external support. Evidence shows, however, that contrary to the South African objective of isolating the ANC, the ANC has benefitted from increasing support in most African countries and has also made headway in countries that are relatively fearful of the spectre of communism.

21) "South Africa in the 1980s", pp. 34-35.

22) Africa Confidential, January 28, 1981.

23) Ibid.



As of this moment, the ANC has offices in Nigeria, Algeria, Senegal, Egypt, Zambia, Tanzania and Angola. It has "representatives" in Botswana, Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. In 1979, the South African Minister of Justice claimed that the ANC received 4 million pounds in aid the year before from Eastern European and Scandinavian countries. He also claimed that the ANC was training guerillas during that same period in Botswana and Mozambique.<sup>24)</sup> Though both these claims are difficult to verify, since the frontline states have continuously stressed that they could not permit ANC military bases within their borders due to their vulnerability to South African military offensives, it is most probable that the ANC has indeed received large sums of money and has been getting, if not direct military aid, broad material support, offices and opportunities to express ANC views in those countries.

Algeria, already actively supporting the Western Saharan liberation movement, allowed ANC to hold a conference in Algiers in 1979<sup>25)</sup>, in which the heads of the mission bureaux all over the world were brought together and analysed their work. In the beginning of 1980, ministers from Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Sao Tome met and vowed to give greater support to the ANC.<sup>26)</sup>

What is clear is that ANC support is not limited to the frontline states but throughout Africa. Following the kidnapping of ANC member, Victor Matlou whilst on his way to Lesotho in December 1979, that same country protested energetically and eventually managed to secure his release.<sup>27)</sup> In the first half of 1980, the ANC's Freedom School opened in Tanzania in which children were to learn technical skills and in which education was also to be geared to correcting racial attitudes.<sup>28)</sup> In June 1980 the West German Social Democrats welcomed ANC plans to establish an office in Bonn in these terms:

24) The Guardian (UK) May 7, 1979.

25) L'Afrique Démocratique (France) September 1979.

26) Daily News (Tanzania) January 29, 1980.

27) Daily News (Tanzania) May 17, 1980.

28) Anti-Apartheid News May 1980.

"The Federal Government should give the ANC political assistance and also help it to overcome bureaucratic obstacles. Only in close cooperation with it can we find the best way for us to contribute to bringing an end to apartheid and to creating rule by a democratically legitimised majority." 29)

Recently, after increasing allegations by the South African government that the ANC was using Zimbabwe for military bases (denied by the ANC), Zimbabwean President Canaan Banana announced in September 1980 full governmental support of the ANC.<sup>30)</sup> Perhaps one of the most significant breakthroughs for the ANC that year was the opening of the office in Dakar, the capital of the pro-West and francophone Senegal.<sup>31)</sup> Finally, most recently after the SADF raid on Matola, Mozambique, world-wide condemnation quickly followed,<sup>32)</sup> and Mozambique emphasized its renewed support for the ANC.<sup>33)</sup>

"Condemnation of the attack continues. A number of speakers at the Non-Aligned Movement Conference in New Delhi have criticized the attack, as has the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations' Secretary General, Dr Waldheim, East and West Germany and the Association of West European Parliaments." 34)

In short, the ANC seems to have been able to consolidate its effective foreign support in recent years.

Within South Africa, it is difficult to measure the degree of support the ANC enjoys since it is illegal to support the two banned liberation movements. However, internal organizations and individuals, while not giving overt recognition of the ANC, have shown, on various occasions, that they do not negate its value. Consistently, inside many have come to the aid of ANC members facing prosecution or awaiting the enactment of death sentences.

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29) Sunday Post (South Africa) June 15, 1980.

30) Sunday Post September 21, 1980.

31) Africa News October 6, 1980.

32) The Guardian (UK) February 12, 1981.

33) Focus March/April 1981.

34) The Guardian (UK) February 12, 1981.



Bishop Tutu, head of the South African Council of Churches, and well-known worldwide for his non-violent activism in the struggle against apartheid, stated within the context of the Pretoria 12 trial (May 1978), in which ANC members were being tried for conspiring to overthrow the government, that he was aware that

"many people may strive to bring about change by peaceful means because it is what they are committed to; and I understand when others feel they have exhausted all avenues of non-violent means." 35)

Bishop Tutu has also been actively supporting the campaign to free Nelson Mandela which is of great significance in view of the CIIR assertion that the ANC has a significant following inside South Africa:

"While it is true that the South African government does try to divide and rule black political groups, the Mandela campaign, calling for the release of a man capable of unifying black political opinion, demonstrates how alert the Black community remains to such tactics." 36)

The Methodist Church has also backed the appeals of South African Churches for a convention in which a just constitution should be drafted. The appeal also demands that Nelson Mandela should, among other political prisoners, take part in the drafting of this new constitution. 37)

After the Matola raid early this year, memorial services commorating the ANC dead were planned in many areas of South Africa, but all were banned by the government. The areas in which services were planned and thus affected by the ban were: Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, Bellville, Goodwood, Wynberg, Simonstown, Kuils River and Stellanboch. 38) ?

Gaster Buthelezi, leader of Inkatha, has tried on various occasions to woo the ANC into talks with his organization, claiming that he is not against the objectives of the ANC per se. 39)

35) Focus No. 16, May 1978.

36) "South Africa in the 1980s" p. 37.

37) The Guardian, June 11, 1980.

38) Rand Daily Mail, February 19, 1981.

39) Rand Daily Mail, October 21, 1980.

It is difficult to verify whether talks have in fact taken place, as Buthelezi has claimed, since the ANC has been reluctant to comment on various of Buthelezi's claims to having a relationship with the ANC.<sup>40)</sup> Nevertheless, Buthelezi's attempts to negotiate with the ANC amount to an acknowledgement that the ANC is, in Inkatha's eyes, the main external (external/internal?) force that must be contended with.

White South African newspapers have also discussed the banned liberation movements, with particular reference to an eventual change of their illegal status. The editor of the Afrikaans daily "Beeld", called for the government to sit at a conference table with the ANC, since he asserted that it had the support of millions inside South Africa.<sup>41)</sup> The Rand Daily Mail also commented on the editor's stance and published a long article of its own, calling for an end to the bannings. Two important themes emerge from this article. Firstly, that the Beeld editorial by not mentioning the ANC's rival, "amounts to an implicit concession that the ANC is the main Black liberation movement in South Africa."<sup>42)</sup> Secondly, the Rand Daily Mail claims that "the ANC is that much closer to being regarded and treated as a viable alternative government."<sup>43)</sup> These articles are significant in the sense that they give the ANC a certain legitimacy and put pressure on the government to take up the challenge of the liberation movements in a different manner than increased repression, the latter being a method which has consistently failed to discourage or eradicate popular support.

Popular support for the ANC, judging from the amount of trials and guerilla attacks in which ANC members or sympathisers are reported to have taken part, seems to be increasingly permeating South African society.

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40) Southern Africa, September/October 1980.

41) Rand Daily Mail, January 10, 1981.

42) Ibid.

43) Ibid.



Since 1976, the ANC seems to have been able to step up its military activity considerably. The ANC's most powerful blow came on June 1, 1980 when guerillas managed to sabotage the SASOL plant and NATREF refinery outside Johannesburg and the SASOL II plant at Secunda.<sup>44)</sup> Guerilla attacks have occurred in all parts of South Africa, a situation that could not have been achieved without some backing from the local population. Attacks close to the South African border have also been increasing difficulties for white farmers there and has caused many to leave the areas under constant attack.<sup>45)</sup>

Since 1977 there have been continuous trials of individuals accused of taking part in ANC guerilla attacks or in covert activity on behalf of the ANC. In May 1977, two youths were sentenced to eighteen months of imprisonment for furthering the aims of the ANC and for distributing Umkhonto We Siwze pamphlets. During that same period ten members in the Natal were accused of recruiting people for military training.<sup>46)</sup> After the explosion of a Sowetan bomb factory in July 1977, in which ANC publications were found, six Africans were tried under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.<sup>47)</sup> In September of that same year, Focus reported that nine individuals were undergoing trial for allegedly establishing escape routes for ANC recruits to flee the country.<sup>48)</sup> Those accused in the "Pretoria 12" trial during this same period were alleged to have been part of a central underground structure in Johannesburg set up by the ANC.<sup>49)</sup> After refusing to collaborate with the prosecution, one of the defendants exposed his perception of the struggle:

"When I joined the ANC I realized that the struggle for freedom would be difficult and would involve sacrifices. I was and I am willing to make those sacrifices. I appreciate the seriousness of my actions and accept whatever sentence may be imposed. 50)

44) Southern Africa, November/December 1980.

45) The Guardian, September 23, 1980.

46) Focus, No. 10, May 1977.

47) Focus, No. 11, July 1977.

48) Focus, No. 12, September 1977.

49) Ibid.

50) Focus, No. 16, May 1978.

The list of trials continues up to the present day, affecting people from all walks of life (e.g. teachers and even former policemen in 1978<sup>51)</sup>), and concerning a long list of different activities such as simple membership, in military training for or recruitment to the ANC.

The campaign to free Nelson Mandela also attracted wide "grass roots" support and managed to collect a large number of signatures in a society in which any form of sympathy for the ANC or for imprisoned ANC members can pose a danger for those involved.

"Support for the campaign came from the coloured community and the Natal Indian Congress, as well as groups of white students who held 'release Mandela' meetings at Cape Town, Pietermaritzburg and Witwatersrand."<sup>52)</sup>

The ANC has been, in the past four years, extremely active in all spheres and this activity seems to have reaped much success. Recent events (the May attacks on police stations and railway lines in Durban and Johannesburg) indicate that activity continues and that more and more individuals are open to the ANC and its particular view of the struggle. The words of a white South African priest exiled in Zimbabwe, who recently announced he would join the ANC, demonstrate the breadth of appeal presently enjoyed by the ANC:

"Christians in Zimbabwe, sharing with South African Christians can convince them to join the revolution in a whole-hearted way."<sup>53)</sup>

Almost all commentators agree that the post-Soweto period has seen a stark rise in the sheer amount of resistance inside South Africa. A recent and major United Nations General Assembly study on developments in South Africa says that

"all evidence from different sources points consistently to major advances since 1976 in the forces of liberation

51) Focus, Nos. 17, 19, July/November 1978.

52) The Citizen, April 15, 1981.

53) Ibid.



in the broadest sense, in terms of organization and unity, in terms of a growth in military capacity and in terms of political consciousness." 54)

Some commentators have stated their assessment of the resistance struggle inside South Africa in even stronger terms. The prestigious Rockefeller Study Commission on US Policy Toward Southern Africa concluded in May of this year:

"As South Africa enters the 1980s, perhaps the most dramatic trend in black politics is the resurgence of the African National Congress." 55)

#### PAC

The creation of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania in 1959, answered the need for an 'Africanist' theory of national liberation that the ANC had been, up until then, unable to satisfy. Africans were, and remain today, at the bottom of the social scale in South African society. Coloureds and Indians, though suffering from racial oppression under the apartheid régime, do not share the same objective conditions as Africans. Consequently, it is vital, according to the PAC, for all Africans to unite into one political force that alone will decide the path the liberation struggle will take. Further, it will decide upon the terms on which other ethnic groups may remain in South Africa. The racial minorities will only be permitted to remain if they accept the political, economic and social structures developed by Africans. There will be no minority rights.

While the ANC accepts the thesis that Africans are economically and politically at the bottom of South African society, it differs greatly in its interpretation of this and its consequences for the struggle. Joe Slovo, a member of the SACP and ANC claims that the PAC strategy is

"objectively liable to alienate vital potential allies in the struggle, to make it easier for the enemy to

54) General Assembly, United Nations, Developments in South Africa Since the Uprisings of 1976, A/Conf. 107/3, 20 April, 1981, p.18.

55) Study Commission on US Policy Toward Southern Africa, South Africa: Time Running Out, University of California Press, 1981, p.202.



win them over as opponents of the liberation thrust. It ignores the very kernel of the art of political leadership which demands in the first place the widest possible yoking of actual and potential allies, and the exploitation of division and weakness within the enemy camp; without of course, compromising the main direction of the struggle. An emphasis on the liberation of the African people does not therefore imply a line-up of the Africanist against the rest."56)

The PAC though, remains in fundamental disagreement with the ANC's arguments, largely, for the reasons outlined in the sections which follow.

"The tragedy of the South African political situation is that many allegedly progressive white intellectuals fail to outgrow the racist environment into which they are born and bred. As a result, they seek to infiltrate the liberation movement in order to shape its policy and programme in the image of their own intellectual wavering. They seek to import into the movement the racist antagonism of the white man against the Africans. This antagonism becomes particularly acute when the Africans refuse to serve the private political interests of the 'progressive' white man.57)

Non-Africans, all enjoying some privileges in apartheid society cannot objectively join the struggle in the same way as Africans. Whites and Indians all have a stake in apartheid and consequently ideal conditions for them to join the struggle are non-existent. Africans, on the other hand, have no stake in apartheid, since their only long-term interest remains its destruction. Only Africans can lead the liberation struggle effectively. In light of these arguments, the objectives of the PAC as outlined in its Policy and Programme are as follows:

"To create an organizational machinery for the organization and mobilization of the African people into a powerful social force bent upon the destruction of all forces and factors that have reduced their stature of man and retarded his growth in our country, and to create conditions favorable for the restoration of man's human worth and dignity and for the full development of his social personality;

56) Joe Slovo, No Middle Road, pp. 131-132.

57) PAC in Perspective, op.cit., p.16.



"To establish for the liberation movement a training ground for the production of a determined, dedicated and disciplined collective leadership which will serve as a symbol of, and living example for, national unity and act as a repository, guardian and custodian of the ideas, principles, methods, policies and programmes of the movement."58)

However, organizationally, the PAC in the last few years has fallen into disarray, and this has had consequences on all aspects of its work. The PAC has had continuous trouble with its leadership, and has been unable at times to integrate new members into its organizational structure. The expulsion of seven central committee members at the Arusha, Tanzania conference in 1978 was undertaken according to the PAC since these members were accused of "circulating documents which endanger clandestine party members, and of organizing within the PAC opposition to the leadership."59) The official PAC explanation concerning the expulsions has nevertheless not been accepted by all:

"Sources close to the PAC say the expulsions are the latest phase of internal turmoil that was heightened last year (1977) by the large-scale influx into the party of young militant refugees from the African township of Soweto. The Soweto youth accuse Leballo and other PAC members of being out of touch with events in Southern Africa and of being more interested in holding on to their positions than in engaging in the liberation struggle."60)

The youth's call was for a change in leadership and it is claimed that the expulsions occurred not for reasons of indiscipline, but for having backed the young militants' call. Another problem still left unresolved during the 1978 conference was that of who was to be named president. Leballo, the acting chairman of the PAC was unable to acquire enough votes to fill the post. Unable to decide unanimously on the person who should assume these responsibilities, the post remained vacant.

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58) Ibid., page 12.

59) Africa News, July 10, 1978.

60) Ibid.

In an interview given to Africa News a few weeks after the end of the conference, the PAC Director for Education and Manpower refuted the arguments that there were internal dissensions within the organization.<sup>61)</sup> The Arusha conference was able, according to him, to strengthen PAC structures within South Africa and that those expelled during the conference were only a small minority.

Nevertheless, despite his claims, divisions within the PAC grew more alarming during the months that followed. David Sibeko, a prominent leader in the PAC, who played an important role in building PAC support inside South Africa, was assassinated in 1979. In Tanzania, six people were charged with the June 11 murder, and another twelve were detained for the purpose of the investigation.<sup>62)</sup> Leaders of the PAC later claimed that Sibeko was killed by three agents of the South African régime masquerading as freedom fighters,<sup>63)</sup> but again, arguments to the contrary dispute these claims. The murder was seen by others to be aimed at eliminating the Presidential Council to which Sibeko was nominated, and reinstall Leballo to the head of the PAC. The Presidential Council, seen as a threat to Leballo's authority, was to be eliminated. Whether these allegations are correct or not, Leballo's controversial role within the PAC was nevertheless existent since he was expelled as chairman in late 1979, and replaced by Visumzi Make.<sup>64)</sup> In light of this, the problems facing the PAC could not be, as Potlako Leballo stated in Azania News (July/August 1978), simply a question of internal contradictions caused by the struggle.

"At the beginning of this year, we said that we saw the tasks of the struggle in 1978 as the regrouping of the forces of our people in order to assemble, train and deploy our scattered forces and fragmented movement. The internal contradictions of the struggle are the major cause of our problems, and this can be found in all revolutions."<sup>65)</sup>

61) Africa News, July 31, 1978.

62) Africa News, July 6, 1979.

63) Daily News, February 27, 1981.

64) Southern Africa, November/December 1979.

65) Azania News, July/August 1978.



The continuing crisis within the PAC had an effect on the Organization of African Unity Conference in 1979. Whereas the year before, the question of ANC/PAC unity had been raised, in 1979 the question was not even mentioned.<sup>66)</sup> The Chairman of the PAC presidential council, Vusi Make, stated that two factions were at war, and that gangsterism and gross indiscipline were rife within the movement. Additionally, some commentators pointed out that Sibeko's funeral in Botswana failed to attract large crowds. This, they interpreted as a clear sign of loss of support for the PAC. New African magazine claimed in September that these facts were:

"likely to strengthen the group in the OAU that thinks the ANC only should be recognized - among countries favouring exclusive ANC recognition are Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Algeria, Benin, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Furthermore, countries like Swaziland and Lesotho now appear to support this position after they detained PAC exiles - allegedly because they were interfering in the internal affairs of their host countries."<sup>67)</sup>

Continuously, there is intense internal discussion within the Tanzanian Government about de-recognition of the PAC. A memorandum dated 26.9.1979 circulated within the Tanzanian Foreign Affairs Ministry stated that Tanzania should de-recognize the PAC but that if it did so "it (Tanzania) would be in a very awkward position because so many other African States have stopped recognizing the PAC and therefore the Tanzanian Government would have no place to send all the PAC people." Tanzanian security officials believe that P.K. Leballo, the recently ousted PAC chairman, is an agent of the South African and Amin Governments. There is a continuing concern that the PAC is greatly infiltrated. This concern is so serious that a 1979 memorandum from the President's office suggested preventing all PAC members from coming to Tanzania.

66) New African, September 1979.

67) Ibid.

In this period of turmoil within the PAC, it is difficult to find any evidence of activity actually undertaken against the white supremacist régime. The main, if not only, major activity undertaken by the PAC since the Soweto uprisings within South Africa was led by those accused in the Bethal 18 trial of trying to overthrow the South African government.<sup>68)</sup> This trial, held for 18 months beginning in January 1978, was for activities conducted by the accused in 1976 and 1977. Additionally, there is the fact that 23 more PAC guerillas were caught in northern South Africa in late 1978, the Justice Minister, Kruger said:

"that there were indications that 78 recruits were being trained in China, but as far as he knew, the PAC was falling into decline."<sup>69)</sup>

The Bethal trial further reinforced Kruger's statement as it was a serious setback for the PAC's South African underground network. It has also been reported that China seems to be increasingly reluctant to give the PAC continued support.<sup>70)</sup> If this is correct, the PAC is far from having resolved the problems that have continuously beset it.

"In recent years the PAC, though recognized along with the ANC by the Organization of African Unity as one of South Africa's historic liberation movements, has been beset by internal rivalries. For this reason, among others, it has increasingly been eclipsed by the ANC which is regarded by most observers as having more coherent ideology and organization and a broader range of support in South Africa and overseas."<sup>71)</sup>

Despite the rather poor record of activity and unity of the PAC since 1978, various changes have occurred and seem to provide grounds for believing that the PAC may be beginning to overcome its internal problems.

At the Central Committee extra-ordinary session in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, held in February 1981, various measures

68) Focus, March 1978.

69) Southern Africa, January 1979.

70) Africa Confidential, January 28, 1981.

71) Africa News, March 1981.



were adopted to reestablish the PAC as a viable liberation movement. Nyati Pokela, a PAC leader formerly imprisoned on Robben Island, and said to be capable of uniting the PAC forces, managed to flee South Africa and was quickly promoted to the role of Chairman of the PAC. This nomination could make the PAC's problems a thing of the past.<sup>72)</sup> Since his nomination, Pokela has stressed the need for unity and has set forth on a campaign to explain clearly what the policies of the PAC really are. The Central Committee meeting also called for all those who were expelled in 1978 to rejoin the PAC.

In mid-June this year, the PAC members accused of killing David Sibeko were found guilty of manslaughter and were sentenced to 15 years each. The Tanzanian High Court judges stated that they did not believe there had ever been an "internal plot to eliminate the leadership of the PAC". Nor did they believe that Vusumzi Make, who had hidden in the closet during the shooting, was in any way involved. Generally, in spite of inconsistencies between statements to the police and testimony in the court, Make's testimony was found credible. Finally, the High Court determined that "the shooting was an act of the highest degree of recklessness."

A PAC press release<sup>73)</sup> demonstrates the high hopes the organization has with the nomination of Pokela as chairman:

"Today the PAC is proud to announce that in a short period of one month since the arrival of comrade Pokela, major steps have been taken to unite the PAC abroad. In concrete terms, we announce the unconditional return to the fold of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania of seventy-two comrades expelled in Arusha, Tanzania, in July 1978. The return of these comrades heralds a major step along the path of uniting the PAC, consolidating it internally and strengthening its organizational and revolutionary potentials. Their unconditional return, moreover, is concrete proof that comrade Pokela has achieved significant success, in a very short period, in fulfilling his mission."<sup>74)</sup>

72) Africa News, March 1981.

73) March 19, 1981.

74) Azania Contact, March 1981.

These claims of the PAC are reflected in press reports worldwide. The Rand Daily Mail<sup>75)</sup> covered the conference, and stated that the bid to regroup began with the expulsion of Leballo as chairman in 1979, and is continuing with the newly appointed chairman Pokela. Africa News<sup>76)</sup> also states that Pokela had been close to Sobukwe, the PAC's first leader and major ideological source who died in 1978. This, Africa News argued, would perhaps help bring about the changes needed.

Despite these modifications, various problems still continue to tarnish the PAC's image. Questions raised in the trial for the murder of Sibeko continue. It is also far from clear how deep dissent has permeated the structure of the organization. Additionally, changes under the Pokela leadership are far too fresh to be able to determine whether they will be of significance and manage to build support internally and internationally. All in all, it remains problematic whether the new developments will enable the PAC to become a liberation movement capable of fighting the apartheid régime of South Africa.

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75) March 27, 1981

76) March 30, 1981.